

REPORT OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE

We hereby submit to the Board of Selectmen and the citizens of Alton, the Report of the Budget Committee of the Town of Alton for 2008. Committee members for 2008-2009 include the following:

Stephen Miller, Chairman
Karen Painter, Vice-Chairman
Greg Fuller, Member
R. Virgil MacDonald, Member
Elizabeth Dominick, Member
Stephen McMahon, Selectmen's Representative
Un-named, School Board Representative

The 2009-2010 budget presented the Budget Committee with significant economic, financial, and service challenges. The past 12 months saw the stock market almost cut in half, unemployment double and still climbing, revenues remaining flat to down, population growing, pensions giving back over 10 years of growth, record home foreclosures, exponential growth in the need for public services, significant and costly legal issues, and critical Alton Central School building and maintenance expenditures. Our challenge was the same as that of most Alton families; generate a thoughtful and conservative fiscal budget while balancing the needs and the wants for both the town and schools.

In October 2008 we were presented a town budget request of \$6,250,372 from the Board of Selectmen. The growing challenge was to balance the needs of a growing operational budget with that of a declining school population. We subsequently recommended a total reduction of \$111,534 during the next three months. The Board of Selectmen in their wisdom made the necessary adjustments to their original budget to more closely match our recommendations during that period of time generating a final variance of only \$19,193. We had our Public Hearing on January 8, 2009 where we recommended an operating budget of \$6,138,838. This represented an increase of \$166,479 or 2.8% over the previous year's budget.

It was the Budget Committee's recommendation in 2007 for the Board of Selectmen to look at current and future major capital expenditures needed for the building and refurbishing of the police station, senior center, fire station, town hall, etc. and finance those future expenditures by an all encompassing special bond issue where the citizens who will most use these facilities pay for them as opposed to today's citizen's making constant appropriations in building capital reserve fund warrant articles. We thank the BOS for their desire to implement this strategy and therefore have voted unanimously for its recommendation to the voters in March 2009.

The Budget Committee failed to recommend two warrant article as proposed by the BOS; Article 17 to appropriate \$40,00 to be added to the building and site improvement capital reserve fund (vote 3-3), and Article 27, to appropriate \$5,000 to the Youth Service Bureau (vote 4-2). Total Special Warrant Articles recommended by the Budget Committee totaled \$3,116,617 a variance of \$45,000.

The School Board originally presented us with a budget of \$8,184,063, an increase of 7.44% from the previous year. Your Budget Committee recommended a budget of \$8,021,409 a reduction of \$162,654 representing a 5.3% increase over the previous year. The School Board subsequently voted to reduce their budget by an equal amount. The school budget including our share of Prospect Mountain High School is jointly recommended at \$13,216,515. All warrant articles totaling \$844,442 were jointly recommended by the School Board and the Budget Committee.

The Budget Committee wishes to thank Elizabeth Dominick whose term expires for her valuable service. We also wish to thank the Board of Selectmen, department heads for the school and town, and the ACS and PMHS School Boards for their steadfast cooperation and consideration for the Budget Committee's work and advice. Alton is and should be proud of their professionalism and public service.

Respectfully submitted
Stephen P. Miller, Chairman